

Colgate University's New Library: A Dynamic Program

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND the philosophy of the new Colgate Library, one must first know something about the educational objectives of the University. Colgate seeks to give its students a mastery of the skills of thinking constructively and independently, of expressing their ideas clearly, and of reading critically and appreciatively. It endeavors to give its students an intelligent understanding of the major fields of human knowledge, special and intensive training in one of those fields, and to implant in students the conviction that a liberal education is a continuing process which is never completed, but which must be carried on throughout life if one is to be a responsible member of society.

This very brief statement does not, of course, give all of the objectives, but one can see at once that, at Colgate, the library is of central importance. It must have a dynamic program. It must be a laboratory—a place in which students, instructors, and books come together under pleasant and informal surroundings and under conditions conducive to productive scholarship and intimate faculty-student-librarian relationships.

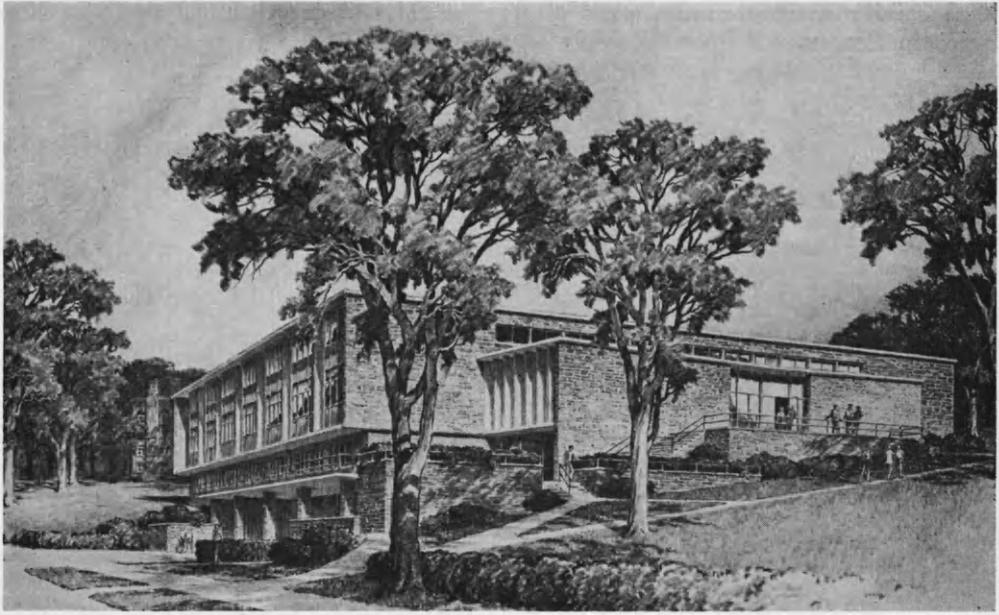
How can the new library develop such a philosophy and, in fact, become an integral part of the teaching program? Here is just one brief example of how we plan to cooperate with the faculty in broadening the student's educational experience at Colgate.

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For several years some of us have lamented the fact that science courses tend to emphasize the *differences* among the sciences rather than their *similarities*. When one tries to approach the sciences on a broader basis, it is very difficult to locate the proper material. This is particularly true in colleges maintaining separate departmental libraries. Although the new central library has brought all of the departmental libraries under one roof (with the exception of small science laboratory collections), this is not the entire solution to the problem. A reading room next to stacks shelving the science books now enables us to experiment in new methods of teaching the history of science—a program to show the interrelation of all sciences. In this room will be brought together a collection of books and periodicals that will not only show the interrelation among the various sciences, but also the effect of other disciplines on the sciences and *vice versa*. Here the humanists, the scientists, and librarians will attempt to bridge gaps that never should have existed in the first place. This experiment is so challenging that foundation support has already been obtained.

We present only one example of the dynamic approach to the use of the new library. Expansion of such teaching techniques will be limited only by the unfinished second floor and lack of initiative and imagination on the part of the faculty and library staff.

The design, furnishings, service, and



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special facilities of the new library are all planned to encourage and broaden the desirable features in our educational program. We hope it will be literally the "cultural center" of the University. Colgate is constantly reviewing the effectiveness of faculty teaching and is attempting to stimulate the intellectual motivation and curiosity of its students. The importance of adequate library service in implementing Colgate's various educational programs is, we believe, self evident.

Because education should be a continuing process, reading conditions in the new library approximate those our students will experience in their own homes after graduation. College, for some students, offers the last chance to acquire the habit of reading.

And what do the students think of the new library? *The Colgate Maroon*, the campus newspaper, has been lavish in praising the new facilities. Opened in time for the fall semester, 1958, ". . . returning students," according to one

campus reporter, "first viewed [the library] as a crisp new building, as functional as it is beautiful, a masterpiece of planning. But already [October], after only a few weeks of classes, they are beginning to see it in a much broader perspective. Designed to be the focal point of the entire educational experience of Colgate, the new Library seems destined to become the heart of the University and the core of the Core Curriculum." And, in an editorial: "Certainly we, the students, cannot help but know the value of the magnificent new library. Its facilities represent a great increase in study and research opportunities. . . . From the moment a person walks into the new structure it is obvious to him that it was designed to fill the students' educational needs as completely as possible."

In addition to the colorful decor and lounge-type furniture, the varied general seating facilities, adequate lighting, etc., students mention particularly the beautifully furnished and equipped music room, browsing room, large periodicals alcove,

typing and microfilm rooms, rapid photo-reproduction service, open reference area, science reading room, "coke and smoke" room, loan service for reproductions of famous paintings, conference rooms, and the fact that they can now find books in an open stack library.

If just a few of the building's outstanding features were singled out, note would be made of the flexibility of the modular construction of the building, the convenience of having all principal public and staff functions located on the main floor, and the fact that the building is designed for one-point control. This means that all readers have to use one entrance and exit except, of course, in emergencies. In other words, one cannot by-pass the charging machine! Mention should be made also of the staff-saving possibilities of locating the reserve desk in back of the circulation desk with joint stacks and work room between and the advantages of a paging system that enables us to clear out the building at night and to locate students in emergencies. The simplicity and openness of the entire building probably give it a distinction all its own.

But the most important thing is that the students like the library and its many new services. This is made evident by a 50 per cent increase in use (number of students in the building) and a substantial gain in the circulation of two-week books.

A combination lecture and exhibition room and a faculty lounge, which may be opened to increase the seating capacity of the lecture room from 140 to 165, was finished in April.

The second, or top, floor at present is unfinished. Here will be located the air-conditioned rare book and archives stacks with a joint reading room, six conference-seminar-honors rooms, glass enclosed and open reading areas, more carrells and faculty studies, general stacks, etc.

The dedication of the new Colgate University Library took place on April 13, 1959.

BUILDING DATA¹

Architects: R. B. O'Connor & W. H. Kilham, Jr., New York.

Cost: \$2,200,000 (equipped and furnished).

Book capacity: 400,000 volumes.

Seating capacity: 600.

Number of stories: Four (including one-half of basement).

Overall dimensions: 187' x 125'.

Module size: 22' 8" x 24' 4".

Square footage: 80,155 sq. ft.

Cubage: 902,798 cu. ft.

Structural frame: Reinforced concrete.

Exterior walls: Brick cavity walls up to first floor; stone with aluminum and steel curtain walls above; light-directing glass block in clerestory.

Floors: Vinyl asbestos, asphalt, and cork tile; terrazzo in lobby.

Stacks: Metal; supplier, Remington Rand.

Furniture: Much of it especially designed and made for Colgate; various suppliers.

Illumination: Fluorescent in reading and public areas; Holophane incandescent in stack areas.

Ventilation: Mechanically ventilated, tempered, and humidified. (Refrigeration can be added for complete air conditioning.)

Heating: Forced hot water.

¹ The second floor will not be completed at this time. However, all data are based upon the building as originally designed.